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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 SCA-01 SS-15 PER-03 MMO-04 /035 W
----------072214Z 108159 /70
R 071953Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9567

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 0250

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP, AMGT, MX
SUBJ: ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSULATE AT ACAPULCO

1. HAVING JUST SPENT A BRIEF HOLIDAY IN ACAPULCO, I HAD OCCASION TO WITNESS ONCE AGAIN THE EVER-GROWING DEMAND FOR CONSULAR SERVICES IN THIS PORT/RESORT CITY. WHILE THIS DEMAND FOR SERVICES IS BOTH VARIED AND COMPLEX AND CONCERNS BOTH MEXICAN AND AMERICAN CITIZENS, IT IS PARTICULARLY TROUBLESOME IN THAT MUCH OF IT RELATES TO PROTECTING AND ASSISTING AMERICANS WHOSE NUMBERS (RESIDENT AND TOURIST) EXCEED HALF A MILLION ANNUALLY. MY LATEST ASSESSMENT OF THIS SITUATION REINFORCES MY EARLIER CONVICTION (SEE MEXICO'S 9409, JULY 22, 1976) THAT THE USG SHOULD OPEN A CONSULATE AT ACAPULCO SOONEST.

2. SECRETARY KISSINGER, WHO WAS VISITING THE CITY AT THE SAME TIME, WAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DRAWN CLOSE TO THESE PROBLEMS WHICH RANGED FROM FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON A TROUBLESOME DOUBLE MURDER TO INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL AIR CARRIERS TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION FOR 250 STRANDED AMERICAN TOURISTS.

3. EARLIER IN 1976, AND MOST RECENTLY LAST WEEK, THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GUERRERO, THE MAYOR OF ACAPULCO, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS, TOURIST AGENTS, AIRLINE AUTHORITIES, HOTEL REPRESENTATIVES, AND A WIDE
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CROSS SECTION OF BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS HAVE ASKED ME TO PUT BEFORE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE AN OVER-WHELMING CASE FOR ESTABLISHING A US CONSULATE. THEY CORRECTLY REASON THAT THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO WOULD BE SERVED BY THIS ACTION.

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4. ALTHOUGH THERE IS STILL PENDING MY REQUEST (MEXICO'S
OM OF MAY 14, 1976) THAT A CONSULAR AGENT BE DESIGNATED
FOR ACAPULCO, AND WHILE I AM STILL HOPEFUL THIS LONG
DELAYED INTERIM REPRESENTATION CAN NOW BE APPROVED, I SHALL
URGE IN THE UPCOMING BUDGET CYCLE THAT PROVISION BE MADE
FOR A SMALL, TWO-OFFICER CONSULATE. ONCE OPEN, THERE IS
EVERY LIKELIHOOD THAT DEA AND LEGATT WILL WISH TO ATTACH
RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES. AND, GIVEN THE PRESENT PACE AND
THRUST OF THE JOINT US/MEXICAN SCREWWORM PROGRAM, THERE IS
THE POSSIBILITY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE MIGHT FIND
IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO ASSIGN SEVERAL OF ITS FIELD SPECIALISTS TO
THAT OFFICE.

5. PERSONS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE VALUE OF CONSULAR
ESTABLISHMENTS OFTEN EXPRESS SURPRISE THAT THE US MAINTAINS
REPRESENTATION IN CITIES SUCH AS MERIDA AND MAZATLAN BUT
FAILS TO DO SO AT ACAPULCO. YET, THEY INVARIABLY NOTE
THAT DESPITE FOREIGN AFFAIRS INTERESTS WHICH ARE CONSID-
ERABLY LESS IMPORTANT THAN OUR OWN, THE GOVERNMENTS OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM, CANADA, FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, NETHER-
LANDS, PHILLIPINES, NORWAY, GUATEMALA AND SWITZERLAND
NEVERTHELESS FIND IT NECESSARY TO HAVE CONSULAR REPRESEN-
TATION IN THIS KEY PORT CITY.

6. MANY FACTOR RECOMMEND THIS STEP. DURING THE PAST
SEVERAL YEARS, AN AVERAGE OF 650,000 TOURISTS HAVE
VISISTED ACAPULCO, AND OF THAT NUMBER 85 PERCENT WERE
AMERICANS. TO SERVICE THIS GROUP, AMERICAN AIR CARRIERS
ALONE PROVIDE 5,000 SEATS EVERY WEEK. AS MANY AS 60
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AMERICAN SHIPS HAVE CALLED IN A SINGLE YEAR, MOST OF THEM
TOURIST CRUISE SHIPS BRINGING THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS,
ALTHOUGH SOME OF THEM ARE US TRAINING, SCIENTIFIC, NAVY
AND COAST GUARD VESSELS ENGAGED IN A WIDE SPECTRUM OF
ACTIVITIES SERVING THE US NATIONAL INTEREST. EACH YEAR
WE ISSUE AT THE EMBASSY VISAS TO SOME 7,000 PEOPLE FROM
THE STATE OF GUERRERO, MOST OF WHOM HAIL FROM THE ACAPULCO
AREA AND MOST OF WHOM COULD BE BETTER SERVED ON THEIR
HOME GROUND RATHER THAN IN THE CAPITAL CITY. THE TENS
OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN VISITORS INVARIABLY CREATE A
SIZEABLE CITIZENSHIP/PASSPORT WORKLOAD, AND FOR AS LONG
AS WE CAN REMEMBER THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A TROUBLESOME
NUMBER OF AMERICANS INCARCERATED AT ACAPULCO. INDEED,
IN RECENT MONTHS, SOME OF OUR MOST VEXING AND COMPLEX
PRISONER CASES AND MANY OF OUR MOST TIME-CONSUMING PRO-
TECTION AND WELFARE PROBLEMS HAVE OCCURRED IN THIS TOURIST
MECCA.

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----------072214Z 108253 /70
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 MEXICO 0250

7. IT NEED HARDLY BE SAID, BUT FEW CITIES IN THE WORLD ARE MORE POPULAR THAN ACAPULCO FOR CONVENTION, AND EACH YEAR HUNDREDS OF AMERICAN SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS (INVOLVING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE) TREK TO THIS PORT FOR CONVENTION BUSINESS AND PLEASURE. TO BETTER ACCOMMODATE THIS IMPORTANT GROUP,THERE IS NOW UNDERWAY A NEW 176 MILLION DOLLAR CONVENTION CENTER. THESE BIGGER AND BETTER FACILITIES CAN ONLY INCREASE FURTHER THE INFLUX OF AMERICAN CONVENTIONEERS.

8. WHILE AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS ARE NOT MAJOR, A NUMBER OF AMERICAN COMPANIES DO OPERATE WITHIN THE ACAPULCO AREA. PROSPECTS FOR THIS COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATION TO INCREASE ARE BRIGHT INASMUCH AS THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEGUN TO FORCE FOREIGN ENTERPRISES TO LOOK FOR SITES OTHER THAN IN MEXICO CITY TO ESTABLISH OR EXPAND PLANTS AND OFFICES.

9. THESE CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY HINT AT THE FULL MAGNITUDE OF WHAT I SEE AS A CLEAR NEED FOR A US CONSULATE AT ACAPULCO.

IN TRANSMITTING THE MISSION'S NEXT BUDGET, A FULLER CASE WILL BE PUT FORWARD. MEANWHILE, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE INVESTMENT OF PERHAPS 150 THOUSAND DOLLARS WILL PAY ENORMOUS DIVIDENDS IN TERMS OF ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR US NATIONAL INTERESTS AND FOR STRENGTHENED CAPA-BILITIES TO PROTECT AND ASSIST THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS WHO FREQUENT THIS FAVORITE MEXICAN CITY.
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PENDING THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO FORMALIZE MY PROPOSAL, I

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URGE ARA AND PPG TO TAKE NOTE OF THIS PRIORITY REQUIREMENT
AND TO MARK WITHIN FORESEEABLE POST OPENING PLANS A PLACE
FOR THIS MUCH NEEDED CONSULAR FACILITY.
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